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New study looks at labour market assistance

A new study by researchers at Curtin University, using Australian Bureau of Statistics data, has shown that wage subsidy programs were the most successful labour market assistance programs for jobseekers between 1994 and 1997. The next most successful were brokered programs (offering a combination of training and work experience) and job search assistance programs.

The effectiveness of labour market assistance programs in improving the rate at which jobseekers found work is revealed in the study by Thorsten Stromback and Mike Dockery. Using data from the ABS longitudinal **Survey of Employment and Unemployment Patterns,** in which the same respondents were interviewed over a number of years, the study looks at what factors influenced the chance of a person leaving a spell of job search and entering employment.

Some of the major findings of the study are:

- All the major labour market programs existing at the time of the survey (1994 to 1997) significantly improved the rate at which jobseekers left periods of job search;
- On average, after finding work, jobseekers who had participated in a labour market program experienced longer periods of work, suggesting that such programs were not simply placing job seekers into short-term or "dead end" jobs;
- Jobseekers born in other than a main English-speaking country, or who had poor English speaking ability, experienced longer durations of job search;
- For jobseekers aged over 45 the chance of entering work fell off significantly with age; and
- Jobseekers who had previously experienced long periods without work were likely to remain looking for work for longer.

Details are in **Labour Market Programs, Unemployment and Employment Hazards: An Application Using the Survey of Employment and Unemployment Patterns** (cat. no. 6293.0.00.002) which is available from ABS bookshops. The views expressed in this Occasional Paper are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the ABS.

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